

State of the City Address

January 18, 2011

Good evening, Council Members, citizens, staff and visitors. I appreciate the opportunity to address you for a few moments tonight. Providing a 'State of the City' address gives me a chance to share a snapshot of the last year and the direction we are moving for the future. As I considered all that has been accomplished during 2010, it became very apparent that the reason for our success is due to the efforts of the wonderful workforce in our City. In acknowledging this fact, I would like to show the "Faces of Murray City – Our Employees" as I deliver my address.

Several weeks ago when I was traveling south out of the valley at the end of the day, I noticed a disabled vehicle on the inside lane of I-15. It is always a worry to see someone with car trouble on the freeway during rush hour. As I got closer, I noticed a police vehicle pulling over to offer assistance. Imagine how I felt when I passed and saw that it was a Murray police officer. Clearly, this officer was on his way home at the end of a long shift and had no obligation to stop to help. This incident is indicative of our employees. They are the type of people who are willing to go the extra mile to help in any situation.

The last few years have brought economic challenges to our City. Our sale tax revenue has dropped by 3 million dollars since 2007 and has yet to begin a serious upswing. Our employees have stayed firm to providing the best possible service while receiving no additional pay increases for 2 years. As we look at our accomplishments, I hope we can remember how that success is achieved by their hard work.

On June 6, 2010, conditions came together to create flooding along Big and Little Cottonwood Creeks. Our Parks Department, Public Services, Police and Fire Departments all responded to this emergency situation that especially impacted areas along the Little Cottonwood Creek. These dedicated public servants managed to coordinate the response, assist residents along the flood's path, organize volunteers to fill sandbags and provide information to the broader community. Their efforts continued for several days as they kept residents from danger, protected private property and undertook a huge clean-up effort.

After the flooding, we had judges in the City as we were evaluated as part of the national "*America in Bloom Program*." The work of our employees left Murray Park and other areas of our City in great condition. We were given a four of five star rating, as well as a special award for cleanliness. Participation also provided us with a blueprint for future improvement ideas.

If I were to focus on one area where we have made significant changes and cost saving improvements, it would be in technology. Almost every area of the City has been improved by taking advantage of these advances. We are communicating more with our residents on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Our citizens can accomplish many tasks by use of computers and smart phones. For example, they can make an on-line application for a business license in the Records Office or request utility services and make electronic payments through our Finance Department. Our IT Department has also worked with Finance to create the required transparency files to be connected to the State database for those interested in tracking local government spending. GIS has updated applications for use in our Emergency Operations Center containing important information on utility locations and base maps for the City. These efforts make our employees more productive and are cost saving efforts, too.

The Murray Library is another example of expanded interest in access to technology, as the use of computer resources had increased by almost 11% over last year. The demand for library materials continues to go up as circulation hit a record of over ½ million items being borrowed. The Library Board and staff are meeting these demands by putting into place a strategic plan that is aggressive and important to the library's future success.

While building permits were down again this year, the ability of inspectors to record their inspections on hand held devices has improved productivity. We are looking forward to the additions continuing to come to Fashion Place Mall. The Larry H. Miller dealerships along State Street are being remodeled and prepared for a long future in this location.

Although we have had to limit capital projects due to budget restrictions, our enterprise departments have been creative at working on lower cost improvements to infrastructure. Maintenance means employees - they shine at making the City look its best. The cemetery concentrated on general maintenance and continued to make it a beautiful location in our City. The water department also focused on maintenance and working with streets, sewer and storm water on projects involving group efforts. This has also proven to be a good time to plan for the future as several master plans have been updated.

The Street division is always busy and they have provided maintenance day-in and day-out. They accomplished many types of repairs; such as slurry seals, keeping paint fresh on the roads and always making great efforts to plow the streets after storms.

Our vehicles have been diligently maintained by our Fleet division as no new vehicles were purchased. Getting additional use from our current fleet has saved us over a million dollars compared to previous year's new vehicle purchases. After completing another bid process, our solid waste collection will continue to be provided by Ace Disposal. Increased costs for the contractor and at the landfill, made a small fee adjustment necessary.

The Murray Parkway Golf Course is also feeling the effects of a tighter economy and weather, as the number of rounds played dropped to the lowest point since it opened in 1986. The irrigation system is wearing out and while we are fixing it in fits and starts, it will need to be replaced. With its proximity to the river, there is a challenge to keep the geese from making it their home.

Murray City Power, our largest enterprise department, is always showing the efforts of our good employees. The storm in November resulted in huge numbers of broken tree branches. In coordination with our Parks and Street employees, they collected the branches and chipped them for mulch. Residents all over the City appreciate the work they do to trim trees. The Power Department continues to provide excellent reliability with a 99.98% 'power on' rating. They also respond quickly to any outages regardless of **when** they occur. They have made tremendous efforts to purchase power from the best blend of available resources and have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars through the process. They are also replacing meters to 'radio read' and have completed 75% of the residential customers to date.

Many of our smaller departments are stepping up to increase the work they accomplish. The Recorder's Office is a great example of this. They have assumed responsibility for animal licensing and renewals without adding any additional personnel. This department records City Council meetings. They purchased and installed **used** shelving for permanent storage in Fire Station 83. They also maintain City Hall and other buildings. The Treasurer oversees our Utility Relief Program, which helped 465 people during the last budget year. They have used technology to receive payments electronically, which lets the City receive payments sooner and more efficiently. The Human Resources Department takes care of many needs our employees have, as well as runs the process for hiring new people. Last year 19 full time

employees left and 14 new ones were hired to replace them. They take care of the safety training for the employees and support the Wellness Committee. This year we received the Gold Level Healthy Worksite Award for their effort.

The Finance Department received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 29th time. They added focus to our risk management, with an assessment of our needs. They completed a bid process to hire a new insurance broker, who saved us costs on property and liability insurance. Finance managed our debt to UTOPIA and made payments to cover the pledge and the new UIA. Customer Service and Utility Billing are staffed with excellent employees who work well to serve the public.

Murray residents rely on our employees to provide many life improvement programs. Parks staff spends time maintaining many parks, trails, swimming pools and other amenities. Last year they spent 500 hours on 284 graffiti work orders. They coordinated over 1700 hours of volunteer service by various residents and groups. Our Parks staff was tremendous in making *'America in Bloom'* successful.

The City's recreation programs are well known as the best in the Salt Lake Valley and are very much in demand. Our commitment to these programs shows our community that we value good health, exercise and positive activity. Over 15,000 people participated in recreation programs last year. Adults are interested in a wide variety of sporting activities and these are being well received as we add them. The Park Center staff made a real effort to invite more participation and memberships. They saw an increase in both this year. New equipment was purchased and has made a positive impact on those interested in memberships. The outdoor Aquatics Center continues to be popular. It has been available for after-hours reservations and has seen an increase in revenue through this program. Arts in the Park had another successful season with almost 12,000 attending. Another 3000 enjoyed the free daytime and family concerts. Almost 1,100 people enjoyed visiting the museum, located here in City Hall.

The Heritage Center hit a milestone this month. They are celebrating 30 years of service. The seniors are impressive when they focus their efforts and have raised over \$33,000 toward a new covered entrance for the building. The classes offered at the Center are well attended and the participants appreciate the good food our employees prepare for them.

Public Safety plays an important role in our City. The employees who serve in these areas have unique responsibilities as they work with our residents. The Fire Department received the official federal designation as part of USAR - Urban Search and Rescue. They are completing advanced training with other entities to provide support for structure collapse, earthquakes and other types of disasters. This department completed their first year operation in Advanced Life Support ambulance service, responding to over 3,500 medical calls and transporting over 2,000 patients.

The Police Department worked with the Murray Justice Court to assist with the back-up of active warrants and successfully disposed of 332 cases this year. The Court has collected over \$1 million dollars in bail money as a result of the work of these warrant officers. Changes were also made this year to Murray Animal Control, which has now been contracted to West Jordan. They are working in our shelter and this partnership has created improvements in service, plus cost savings.

Murray City Justice Court provides both a DUI and Drug Court with a goal to reduce repeat offenses. Costs for cases processed in this court are among the lowest, with a single judge, in the County. The Attorney's Office plays an important role in the success of the court as 75% of the office's resources are directed to criminal prosecution. They handled over 10,000 cases in 2010.

The Attorney's Office also worked hard to advise the City and elected officials on RDA negotiations, employee issues, claims for accidents and contract negotiations. These are just a few of their many responsibilities.

It takes many faces to focus our efforts and to find positives when the going is rough. I am excited about the future of our City. Our Community and Economic Development Department has helped give us many opportunities to work toward. The Downtown Master Plan is progressing well. We have appreciated all the interest and input it has generated. We will be applying for funding consideration with Salt Lake County to help us build a Performing Arts Center that could provide several communities with a location for cultural events. It would be a wonderful anchor for the vision of Downtown. NeighborWorks of Salt Lake City has partnered with us and opened a new office in our downtown. They will offer our residents many opportunities to make improvements to their properties and living situations.

I believe our economic picture will continue to improve as the Fashion Place Mall renovations are finished and the Larry H. Miller dealerships complete their new homes. Other projects are being actively pursued that could bring more positive development.

As we look to a promising future, I hope you have seen its reality in the **faces of our employees**. They come to work with an attitude ready to provide service and are always willing to step in to get the job done. They are competent, confident and valuable. I recognize their work and efforts tonight. Thank you, Murray City employees, for what you accomplish in our City.

I look forward to continuing to work hand in hand with **you** as we take Murray City into the future. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you tonight.